

## Chapter 7: Good News or Bad News?

Chris and Bobby were pretty tired when they finally got back to their Aunt Carla's house.

"Did you have a good time?" Carla asked Chris and Bobby as they came through the door.

"Yeah!" Chris said, "but the waves were pretty small."

"Big enough for me," Bobby chimed in, "but, we had the *best* time at Mount Trashmore."

Carla smiled and looked over at Kelly as she came through the door and headed for the pool, "wait a minute young lady!"

"You kids bring in the stuff from the car before you get in the pool!" Carla instructed and everyone went back out to grab the things from the car.

Kenny was the first to come in. He walked over to Carla as she was preparing dinner, "What's for dinner, honey?"

"Chicken and dumplings", she replied as she scooped up a spoonful for him to taste.

"Pretty darn good," Kenny said and handed a spoonful to Bobby as he came over to the stove.

"My mom makes the *best* chicken and dumplings," Bobby bragged.

“Yeah?” Kenny replied, “I believe they both use your grandma’s recipe,” and looked at Carla for confirmation.

“That’s right,” she said.

“Smells good,” Lorene said as she walked into the kitchen. “You put Old Bay in that?”

“Of course,” Carla confirmed, “it was mama’s secret ingredient.”

“Yep,” Lorene agreed. “I like it a little spicier than mama’s though.”

“Me too,” Carla said, “here, try it,” Carla handed her a spoonful.



“Yeah!” Lorene approved. “Just right!”

“Can we go in the pool after we eat?” Chris asked.

“Man, I wish I had their energy,” Kenny said, and Carla agreed.

After dinner the kids played in the pool until dark, then Carla turned on the lights under the pool and they played for another hour.

“Those kids are gonna be so tired,” Kenny said, “They’re gonna sleep like a log tonight.”

“Good,” Bob said, “I’m gonna get up early and start making some phone calls in preparation for the move.”

“You can’t call too early,” Lorene reminded him, “remember it’s three hours earlier back there.”

“Oh yeah,” Bob remembered. “I’ll start calling around 10.”

“Who ya gonna call first?” Lorene asked.

“Well, first I need to call Kevin and let him know our plans so he can start looking for someone else on the job.”

“Gonna miss Mary and Kevin,” Lorene said, “but, I’m sure they’ll understand.”

“We can always call them and go back for visits,” Bob said, and Lorene smiled.

“Then, I’ll call the landlord,” Bob said. “Sure glad we don’t have a lease.”

“Yeah,” Lorene agreed, “but we need to give at least thirty days’ notice if we want to get our deposit back,” she reminded him, “and we will need that for the move.”

“Don’t you think you need to find out if you would be approved for a loan first?” Carla interrupted.

"I'm sure that's not a problem," Bob answered. "We were just approved for a loan on a townhouse back there, but we decided the mortgage payment was more than we wanted to pay."

"Oh really?" Kenny said as he walked in and sat down at the table.

"The place we rent is nice," Lorene said, "but if we buy mama and daddy's house, the mortgage will be almost half of what we'd pay in San Diego for rent."

"Are you kidding?" Carla said with a bit of disbelief.

"With hardly a yard either," Bob said, "and no garage. I gotta have a garage."

"Still," Kenny advised them, "I would check with our mortgage broker, Donna, first before you talk to your landlord."

"Yeah I agree," Bob said, and Lorene agreed too.

"I'll give you Donna's number," Kenny pulled out his wallet and handed Bob her business card.

Bob looked at it and said, "Ok, I'll call her first thing in the morning."

"Are the kids still sleeping?" Carla asked Kenny.

"Yep," Kenny said.

"Told ya they'd be sleeping in," Bob continued, "they worked it pretty hard yesterday."

"Poor babies," Carla said with a little sarcasm, "had to play too hard yesterday." They all laughed.

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The next morning, Kenny called Donna their mortgage broker. “Hi Donna,” Kenny said when she answered the phone. “My brother-in-law, Bob, wants to talk to you about getting approved for a mortgage,” and handed the phone to Bob.

They all listened in as Bob talked to her, then he politely said goodbye and hung up.

“She asked if we could come down to the office today,” Bob explained, “so I said we’d be there around eleven o’clock.”

Lorene looked at Carla, “OK if we leave the kids here?”

“Sure,” Carla said, “no problem.”

The kids eventually all woke up and Chris noticed that mom and dad were gone.

“Where’s mom and dad?” Chris asked.

“They had some business to attend to,” Kenny said, “they’ll be back soon.”

“Can we go in the pool?” Chris asked.

“Sure,” Kenny said, “but don’t get wild out there and splash out the water like you did last night, I spent all morning filling it back up.”

“OK,” Chris said, “Sorry.”

“Did Kelly and Curtis get up yet?” Carla asked, “It’s almost noon.”

“I think I heard someone rustling around back there,” Kenny said and walked down the hall to find out.

“Gonna sleep all day?” Kenny yelled into their rooms and fussed at them to get up.

Wasn’t long and all the kids were in the pool again.



“So glad we decided to have that pool put in,” Carla said as she watched the kids playing.

“Yep,” Kenny said, “but it sure cost a pretty penny.”

“Best investment we’ve ever made,” Carla reminded him. “The kids play here so we can keep an eye on them. I like that.”

“Yeah,” Kenny agreed, “We learned really quick about which kids in the neighborhood were welcome and which were not!”

“They don’t think we can hear what they’re saying out there,” Carla said smiling, “but we do.”

"The way some of these kids talk," Kenny said, "I can't imagine what their parents must be like."

"Yeah, well we don't want to meet them to find out," Carla said, "they aren't welcome here."

"One little boy around ten years old came over one day with five of his buddies," Kenny told them, "When I said that they couldn't all come in, one of 'em got smart-mouthed with me, and I sent him home. They haven't come around again."

"They weren't my friends anyway!" Kelly said when she came in to grab a Coke from the fridge. "I'm glad they didn't come back," she said, "I don't like them, anyway."

"They should be back soon," Carla said changing the subject, "what do you want for dinner?"

"Hey," Kenny replied, "let me take everyone out for dinner," and gave her a hug while she washed up the dishes.

"That's a great idea," she said, "I'm pooped."

"How about Nicks?" Kenny asked.

"Sounds good," Carla said finally.

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Carla heard Bob and Lorene drive up and she and Kenny went out to greet them, away from the kids.

"How'd it go y'all?" Carla asked in anticipation.

“Well,” Bob said, “She thought we wouldn’t have any problem qualifying for a loan, so we need to get a ton of paperwork together when we get home and send it to her.”

“That’s great!” Carla said and gave Lorene a hug.

Kenny shook Bob’s hand.

“Should we tell the kids now?” Lorene asked looking at Bob.

“Sure,” Bob said, “what are they up to?”

“In the pool,” Kenny said, “where else?”

They all walked out back and sat down at the picnic table next to the pool.

“Hey mom and dad!” Bobby yelled out, “wanna come in?”

“No,” dad yelled back, “you guys come over here, we have some news for ya.”

Chris and Bobby got out of the pool and toweled off then came and sat down at the table.

“What would you both think about us moving here?” Bob asked looking at them both.

“What?” Bobby was totally surprised, “really?”

“What about my friends in San Diego?” Chris asked.

“Well,” Lorene said calmly, “You can make friends here and hang out with your cousins.”



“What about our family back there?” Chris said again. “I’ll miss Uncle Kevin and Aunt Mary, Uncle Gary, Aunt Marsha, Uncle Ted, and Grandma Helen,” he said looking down.

“Well,” Bob said finally, “we’ve pretty much decided to buy your grandpa’s house.”

“We’re gonna live in *that* house?” Bobby said a little nervous as he looked straight at Chris to see his reaction.

“Why?” Lorene asked, “what’s wrong with that? I had a great childhood growing up in that house.”

“Yeah, but...” Bobby started to say something then stopped.

“Just give it time,” Lorene said, “you’ll learn to love it.”

“Yeah right,” Chris said under his breath and Bobby got quiet and didn’t say anything else.

“Can we go back in the pool now?” Chris asked.

“Sure,” Lorene said and looked at Bob a bit surprised about the boy’s reaction.

“They’ll like it when they get used to living here,” Bob assured her, “They have a lot of friends out there, but they’ll come around.”

When mom and dad went back into the house, Bobby said quietly to Chris without Kelly and Curtis overhearing, “do you want to live in that house? It’s kind of creepy don’t you think?”

“Yeah,” Chris said deep in thought, “but, I guess we’ll get used to it.” But secretly, Bobby wasn’t crazy about the idea, and neither was Chris.

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At dinner, Bob and Lorene talked to Kenny and Carla most of the evening about the house and what things they wanted to do to it.

“I’m taking off that seventy’s-looking awning in the front and making a long porch with a swing,” Bob said, and Lorene agreed.

“We gotta completely remodel that old-fashioned kitchen,” Lorene said, “and the bathroom too.”

“Speaking of bathrooms,” Bob continued, “I’m gonna extend our bedroom out and build a bathroom for us.” Lorene really liked that idea.

“You may want to extend the dining room area too,” Kenny said, “Carl always wanted to do that, in fact, the cinder blocks in the back yard are still there for that reason.”

“Right,” Carla remembered. “We made forts out of those bricks many times.”

“Well,” Bob said, “I can sure use them.” The boys walked in from the pool and then Bob had another idea to cheer them up about the move, “How d’you like us to join the pool?”

“Yeah!” Bobby gave his dad a high five. Chris liked that idea as well.

“If it helps boys,” Bob said to them, “we could build a twelve-foot half pipe in the backyard, would you like that?” he waited for their reaction.

Chris and Bobby looked at each other with eyes wide open. They were starting to think that this move might not be so bad.

“Let’s go over to the house tomorrow and kick around some ideas,” Bob said, and everyone agreed. “We want to make sure we get a loan large enough to cover all this stuff we want to do.”

Everyone was starting to get used to the idea the more they talked about it.

“Let’s get as much done here as we can before we leave to go back to San Diego on Monday,” dad said.

That night, Chris lay in bed thinking about all the changes that were about to happen. He would miss his family and friends, but he thought it might be fun playing in the woods and lakes and doing some of the fun things his mom did growing up here. He fell asleep thinking about it all.

Bobby did too.

